United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/727
18 September 1990

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ General Assembly begins forty-fifth session; Guido de Marco of Malta, elected President; Liechtenstein admitted as new Member.

+ Secretary-General issues his annual report on work of the Organization.

+ No agreement reached on main issue in fifth round of direct talks between Government of El Salvador and FMLN.

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The General Assembly this afternoon began its forty-fifth session and elected its new President, Guido de Marco of Malta.

The Assembly then decided to admit Liechtenstein as a new Member of the Organization.

In his opening address, Mr. de Marco stated that despite the heralding of the end of the cold war, events over the last few weeks had brought about the realization that there were still serious problems which continued to pose threats to the world's political, economic and social development.

People around the world, he said, were looking to the United Nations for moral and political guidance and for a contribution to the solution of the present Gulf crisis.

Emphasizing that the problem of Palestine was of central concern to the international community, Mr. de Marco stated that the current session of the Assembly "must exert all its authority and use all diplomatic pressure on the parties concerned in order to reach a comprehensive settlement to the Palestinian question".

The new Assembly President also mentioned Cyprus and Lebanon as areas which required the efforts of the international community.

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He also said that never before had the international environment offered better opportunities for genuinely collective action in reversing the ever-widening gap between rich and poor.

The opening of a new session of the General Assembly is traditionally observed by the United Nations as the International Day of Peace. In a message for the occasion, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said that a new era was emerging in international relations, with the United Nations increasingly being called upon to play a central role in the search for solutions to global problems. Despite all the tensions in the world, he further said, and especially at present in the Middle East, the past year had witnessed real progress in resolving several ongoing regional conflicts.

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The world is presently experiencing a period which contains both the "aspect of hope and the countenance of dangerous unrestraint". This was stated by the Secretary-General in his annual report on the work of the Organization, issued today at United Nations Headquarters.

The Secretary-General stated that in one major segment of world affairs a "political change of a phenomenal character" had happened. However, in large parts of the globe the scene continued to be one of "simmering resentments, violent collisions and at best a precarious peace".

Among the topics with particular significance for the United Nations, the Secretary-General cited the developments in Eastern and Central Europe and the demonstration that a status quo based primarily on the military factor was bound to prove fragile. This larger concept of security, which had begun to emerge, was precisely the one the United Nations had been expounding all through the years, he said.

During the year under review the Organization had had remarkable success in conducting a variety of operations aimed at managing peaceful transitions in societies troubled by conflicts, the Secretary-General reported. Among those, the settlement of the question of Namibia had also had a healthy impact on the situation in southern Africa.

The United Nations' involvement in Central America, he went on to say, had been complex and varied and the Organization had undertaken a wide range of endeavours pertaining to peace in that region in the past year. However, it had not yet been possible to reach the goals of the Agreement known as Esquipulas II.

Encouraging progress continued to be made towards resolving the problem of Western Sahara, the Secretary-General said, and a solution to the conflict of Cambodia might now be within reach with the agreement on a framework for a comprehensive political settlement based on an enhanced role of the United Nations.

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However, recent and alarming dangers had arisen in the Middle East, with the invasion and purported annexation of the State of Kuwait by Iraq. The Secretary-General emphasized that progress could not be made on the overall situation in that region, including the Arab-Israeli conflict, until the present crisis was set on the way to solution in accordance with the position taken by the Security Council.

Another urgent question -- the protection of the environment -- had been put on the global agenda for the first time nearly two decades ago, the Secretary-General reported. Although the deterioration of the environment had not yet been arrested, there had been a universal awakening to the profound dangers involved. The Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992, would consider conventions on such critical issues as climate change and biological diversity, he said.

On the problem of development, the Secretary-General said that the distortions in the international economy were reflected in the crisis of the least developed countries, most of which were in Africa. The progressive deepening of the debt crisis posed a grave threat to the political, social and economic order in many of the affected countries.

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Alvaro de Soto, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative on Central America, declared today that the representatives of the Government of El Salvador and of Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) had not been able to reach agreement on the main issue of the armed forces during the current round of direct talks which lasted from 13 to 18 September in San José, Costa Rica.

Mr. de Soto said that the next meeting was scheduled to take place in Mexico not later than 4 November. In the meantime, he said, channels established in the Geneva Accord would be used to give incentive to the peace process under way to which both parties had reiterated their firm support.

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READEX FICHE

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DH/728
19 September 1990

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ General Committee recommends to General Assembly new agenda item on Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, for priority consideration; proposes 153 items for Assembly's agenda.

+ Assembly Committees elect chairmen.

+ World economy is "slipping into recession", according to 1990 Trade and Development Report.

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Inclusion of a new agenda item on the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was recommended this morning by the General Committee for priority consideration by the General Assembly's forty-fifth session. Request for the inclusion of the item was made by Kuwait and was seconded by Nepal, Lebanon, Egypt and Senegal.

The General Committee recommended that the Assembly include 153 items in the agenda of its current session, which began yesterday, and that it defer consideration of four items (on military and paramilitary activities against Nicaragua; the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India; the question of East Timor; and good-neighbourliness between States) until its next regular session.

The provisional agenda, as well as the Committee's recommendations for the allocation of items among the Assembly and its Main Committees, will go before the Assembly on Friday morning, 21 September. Of the 153 items on the provisional agenda, 152 were allocated. In accordance with previous practice, the allocation of item 44, on the question of Cyprus, was deferred until an appropriate time in the future.

Among other new items proposed for inclusion were: "Implementation of the commitments and policies for international development co-operation agreed upon in the Declaration on International Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries" and "Observer status for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)".

The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly recess on 18 December 1990 and conclude on 16 September 1991.

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It also endorsed the Secretary-General's suggestions that the general debate should begin on Monday, 24 September, and end on Thursday, 11 October.

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The Assembly's seven Main Committees have chosen their chairmen for the forty-fifth session.

Perezi Karukubiro-Kamunanwire, Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations since 1988 was elected Chairman of the Special Political Committee. Jai Pratap Rana, Permanent Representative of Nepal since 1985, was elected Chairman of the Political and Security Committee.

Counsellor in charge of economic affairs of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, George Papadatos, was elected Chairman of the Economic and Financial Committee. Juan O. Somavia, the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, became the Chairman of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee. The new Chairman of the Decolonization Committee is Martin Adouki, Permanent Representative of the Congo to the United Nations since 1985. Ernest Besley Maycock, the Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations, was elected Chairman of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee. Vaclav Mikulka, Deputy Permanent Representative of Czechoslovakia, is the new Chairman of the Legal Committee.

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According to a new report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the world economy seems to be "slipping into recession -- a tendency that only some countries in Asia and some members of the European Economic Community appear likely to resist".

Briefing correspondents at Headquarters, Roger Lawrence, Director of UNCTAD and head of the team that produced this year's Trade and Development Report, said recent events in the Middle East were reinforcing the tendency towards global recession.

The report was produced on 1 August, one day before Iraq invaded Kuwait, he said, when "many things looked different". The increased price of oil that had occurred since then could, if it persisted, lower growth in the major countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) by one quarter to one half a percentage point, he said.

The 1990 Trade and Development Report contained an extensive analysis of the consequences of the globalization of finance, Mr. Lawrence said. He pointed out that an integration of financial activity with the capital and equity markets had not led to higher levels of investment and growth as had been expected, but rather to increased speculation and swings in market activity.

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DH/729
20 September 1990

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council welcomes formation of Supreme National Council by parties to Cambodia conflict.

+ General Assembly President meets press.

+ Sanctions Committee appeals urgently for assistance to Jordan to mitigate consequences of Persian Gulf crisis.

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The Security Council this afternoon welcomed the formation by the parties to the Cambodia conflict of a Supreme National Council, and urged the members of that Council to elect a chairman as soon as possible.

It took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 668 (1990), which endorses the settlement framework elaborated by the permanent members of the Security Council and welcomes the Cambodian parties' acceptance of that framework at the Jakarta meeting of 10 September.

The Security Council called also for the Co-Chairmen of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia to intensify consultations aimed at reconvening the Conference so that it can elaborate and adopt a comprehensive political settlement in line with the framework.

These actions come in the wake of the meeting of the Supreme National Council on 17 and 18 September, which failed to elect a chairman.

The resolution also encourages the Secretary-General to continue, within the context of preparations for reconvening the Paris Conference, assessing the resource implications, timing and other considerations relevant to the United Nations role in a Cambodian settlement.

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Addressing correspondents today at a press conference at Headquarters, the President of the General Assembly's forty-fifth session, Guido de Marco of

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Malta, emphazised that the question of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was bound to be a primary issue for the Assembly.

All the great advantages that had been obtained from the East-West partnership could be jeopardized as a result of events that might evolve in the Middle East, Mr. de Marco said. Those events had again highlighted the importance of holding the international peace conference on the question of the Middle East, he stated, adding that it was "perhaps the longest lasting question that the Assembly has been considering".

Another problem that would get attention in the debate, the new Assembly President said, was the serious situation of the least developed countries and the effect of the debt crisis and the recent increase of oil prices on those countries.

Also the serious situation for the 12 million refugees all over the world would be a core issue for the General Assembly, Mr. de Marco said.

In reply to questions asked by correspondents he said that the Gulf conflict had added another dimension to the need for the international peace conference on the Middle East. However, a distinction should be made between the problem of Palestine and the current crisis in the Gulf, Mr. de Marco pointed out.

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The Security Council's Sanctions Committee has appealed to all States, on an urgent basis, to provide immediate technical, financial and material assistance to Jordan to mitigate the consequences of the difficulties faced by that country as a result of the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

In a special report to the Security Council concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, based on information received from Jordan with regard to the economic problems it faces in connection with implementing resolution 661, the Sanctions Committee requested that the Secretary-General "undertake expeditiously, in co-operation with the Government of Jordan, a full assessment with suggestions for appropriate remedies" to those problems.

It also requested that the Secretary-General develop methods for the purpose of receiving information from States about the "contribution which they have made or are prepared to make to alleviate the longer-term hardships confronting Jordan".

The Security Council held consultations this afternoon on the Sanctions Committee's report.

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Prepared by Central News

DH/730
21 September 1990

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ General Assembly approves agenda of 153 items for forty-fifth session.

+ Minister of Foreign Affairs of Soviet Union to preside over Security Council meeting on "Situation between Iraq and Kuwait" on Tuesday, 25 September.

+ Minister of Justice of El Salvador tells correspondents at Headquarters that Secretary-General has become "guarantor" of peace talks between Government and Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN).

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The General Assembly this morning approved a 153-item agenda for its forty-fifth session, including a new item on the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait which is to be given priority consideration. President of the General Assembly, Guido de Marco of Malta, told the Assembly that the wording of that item -- item 153 -- "Iraqi aggression and the continued occupation of Kuwait in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions" had been revised to read: "Iraqi aggression and the continued occupation of Kuwait in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations".

The Assembly also approved the allocation of 152 items among its seven Main Committees. As in previous years, the allocation of item 43, on the question of Cyprus, was deferred until an appropriate time in the future. Another item (on military and paramilitary activities against Nicaragua) was deferred indefinitely; and three more (on the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India; the question of East Timor; and good-neighbourliness between States, respectively) were deferred until the next regular session.

Regarding the wording of item 153 on the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the representative of Iraq suggested that it would be more appropriate for the

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title of the item to refer instead to the United States military build-up in the Gulf region. The Assembly took note of his position, but maintained the wording.

Other new items on this year's agenda pertain to the elaboration of norms for United Nations conciliation efforts and elaboration of an additional protocol to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (allocated to the Sixth Committee (Legal)); and observer status for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (to be considered in plenary).

Items entailing special plenary observances during the session include, for example, a ceremony for the presentation of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children (1 October, at 9:30 a.m.) and the thirtieth anniversary of the General Assembly's 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (the morning of 11 October).

Among the items up for renewed consideration are the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. Also items on peace initiatives in Afghanistan, in Cambodia, and in Central America have been been on the agenda in previous years. Other items include development and international economic co-operation; external debt crisis and development; and administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

The Assembly decided to recess on 18 December 1990 and end its session on 16 September 1991.

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In a message issued this afternoon, President of the Security Council, Guennadi I. Oudovenko, of the Soviet Union, informed members of the Council of his intention to call a meeting of the Council for the consideration of the item "situation between Iraq and Kuwait" on Tuesday, 25 September, in the afternoon with the understanding that the meeting will be presided by E.A. Shevardnadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Oudovenko stated that several members of the Council had made known their intention to be represented at that meeting also on the ministerial level with the hope that their intention will be shared by a majority of council members.

Informal consultations of the Security Council in connection with that meeting are scheduled to be held on Monday at 4 p.m.

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Minister of Justice of El Salvador and Head of the Negotiating Commission to the talks with the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional

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(FMLN), Oscar Santa Maria, told correspondents at Headquarters this afternoon that the peace process was under way toward the objective set in Geneva last April.

The fact that the direct talks were under the auspices of the Secretary-General had permitted advancement as never before, as the Secretary-General was perceived as a guarantor of the process, Mr. Santa Maria said.

His government believed that the FMLN should be given the opportunity to become a political force, he said. So far results had been attained in the areas of human rights and the electoral process, he stated, however, the topic of the armed forces had taken up most of the time.

The point of departure was a FMLN proposal called "the demilitarization of Salvadoran society" which included the concept of two armies, the FMLN and the armed forces of El Salvador.

His Government, he said, presented a counter-proposal called "the role of the armed forces in a democratic society".

The Minister said the FMLN proposal was a "drawback in negotiations" and a "strategy to slow down the process" since it made the attainment of a cease-fire at this time impossible. The process had been satisfactory so far, he said, but efforts must be intensified by all parties.

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